

Legislative News



Education Issues Touted as Common Purpose among State Legislators

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ISSUE 5

The 2009 legislative session kicked off with addresses from Secretary of State Robin Carnahan, Senate President Pro Tem Charlie Shields, Speaker of the House Ron Richard, and Speaker Pro Tem Bryan Pratt. Each emphasized the importance of working together and the value of education – including higher education. Their comments included:

Secretary of State Robin Carnahan listed the “areas of common purpose that bind us together,” including “helping young people build a strong foundation for their future by having access to world class schools and affordable college education right here in Missouri.”

Senator Charlie Shields, President Pro Tem of the Senate:

“As a strategy, we must move more of our young people into an education experience past high school if we are going to compete with our neighboring states. But more importantly, we must do this if we are going to compete with the rest of the world....

“If we are to succeed in creating a more educated workforce, we must make changes in our education system from birth to higher education. Our early childhood education system needs to make sure every child enters school ready to learn by ensuring access to quality early childhood education and support for stay-at-home parents. Our elementary and secondary education system has to

produce students who are capable of post-secondary education, and our higher education system has to realize the competition is not with each other, but with countries like India and China.”

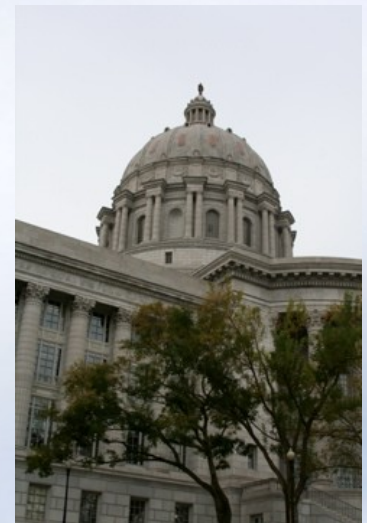
Representative Ron Richard, Speaker of the House:

“Training a skilled workforce is a key component to economic success. Missouri's economic engine is its people, and it is only through efficient and strong schools that guarantee every child the right to a successful education – that our economic engine can realize its full potential.

“Our universities and community colleges are a vital part of the plan that will develop our workforce and draw new business to our state. Even in a difficult budget year, we are willing and ready to work with them to ensure a quality education that results in future success.”

Bryan Pratt, Speaker Pro Tem of the House:

“I may also tell my grandchildren about how we addressed education: Six years ago, Missouri faced withholds to education. What did we do? We passed the largest education budgets in Missouri history. What are we going to do? ... We will pass the largest education budget in Missouri history, and ensure those dollars are spent educating our children.”



Higher Education Bills Filed This Week

SB 152 Modifies the definition of eligible student for nursing student loan program to include doctoral students and to allow full time or part-time doctoral students to be eligible for the loan program.

HJR 11 Proposes a constitutional amendment guaranteeing the right to pray in public schools and requiring public elementary and secondary schools to display the text of the Bill of Rights.

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

State Commissioner of Education Passes Away

D. Kent King, the state education commissioner, died Wednesday at his home in Rolla after a long battle with brain cancer. Dr. King spent eight years as the state's highest ranking education official and was a long time leader in Missouri's public education system. The Coordinating Board for Higher Education and the Missouri Department of Higher Education express their deepest sympathy and regard for Commissioner King.



*Dr. Kent King, Missouri
Commissioner of
Education*

Senate Seminar on Higher Education

The Senate will host seminars in the coming weeks to educate legislators – especially new legislators -- on various issues, including higher education. The higher education seminar will be held Thursday, Jan. 22 from 8 – 9:30 am in a Senate hearing room (to be determined). Agenda items include discussion and presentations by Michael Nietzel, President, Missouri State University; Gary Forsee, President, University of Missouri System; and a representative from the Midwest Higher Education Compact. Other speakers may be announced at a later date.

"The reality is higher education interests cannot be met when they speak with multiple voices. It's as simple as that. If the higher education community remains divided, it will remain ineffective."

-Senator Gary Nodler

Session Schedule

The Senate will convene at 10:30 am on Monday, Jan. 12. The House of Representatives will convene at 9 am. Both houses will recess to attend Inaugural ceremonies.

The legislature will stand adjourned for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday on Monday, Jan. 17.

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Gov.-elect Nixon Names More Cabinet Members and Senior Staff

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Kelvin Simmons

Director of Corrections-
George Lombardi

Director of Economic Development-
Linda Martinez

Director of Health & Senior Services-
Margaret Donnelly

Director of Revenue-
Karen K. Mitchell

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